

TUC Impact at a glance



218

Students
Registered

51

NEW
Students



109

Students Graduated



64%

are the first
in their family to study



68%

of students are
15-25 years of age

26%

of students
Identify as First
Nations People



24%

of students have
a disability



64%

of students
are female



62%

of students enrolled in
Uni Bridging &/Or
Vocational Certificates

38%

of students pursuing
Diplomas, Degrees,
Masters & PHD Studies

TOP AREAS OF STUDY University

1. Health
2. Society & Culture
(Social W, Psych, Arts, Law)
3. Education
4. Management & Commerce

Vocational/Bridging

1. Pathways/Foundation Skills
2. Agriculture
3. Health



TABLELANDS
UNIVERSITY
CENTRE

HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPORT BY

VPG

OCTOBER 2024 - MARCH 2025 SERVICE HIGHLIGHTS



In March, the Tablelands University Centre (TUC) welcomed its 200th student - a milestone that highlights the growing demand for local access to higher education. Our 200th student, Abbey Wilson (pictured), is studying a STEPS bridging course through CQUniversity as a pathway to a Bachelor of Paramedic Science. Abbey's story highlights why we're here. An early school leaver, balancing two jobs and living in a busy household, the dedicated study space and support TUC provides gives her the environment to focus, stay on track, and connect with her peers.

Reflecting on this milestone, Maryanne Tranter, VPG CEO, shared how this achievement confirms the need for accessible education in our region. "Reaching our 200th student milestone confirms what we've always believed - there's tremendous appetite for higher education in our region. Locals no longer have to choose between staying in their community and pursuing higher education."

Tablelands Mayor Rod Marti also pointed out how critical TUC is to the region's workforce development. "The 200 student milestone at the TUC represents 200 potential skilled professionals for our local workforce. I congratulate VPG for creating opportunities for locals to gain qualifications locally. By training local talent for local jobs, we're addressing skills shortages while keeping our future professionals right here on the Tablelands."

Reaching 200 students is just the beginning. We're excited to keep growing, ensuring our communities have access to the education, resources, and opportunities they need to succeed.

★ Read the full story in the [The Express](#).

Lifeline for Local Parents

At TUC, 30 students are parents, with 28 of them being mums. These students are not only upskilling for future careers - they're also raising families, supporting loved ones, and are deeply embedded in their communities. Balancing the demands of family life, caregiving, and education is no small feat. TUC recognises the unique challenges they face and provides a welcoming space where they can study, access local, on-the-ground support, and stay connected to their community. We're helping parents get the education they need for the jobs they want, without leaving the Tablelands.



30
PARENTS

28
MUMS



Social Work Industry Mentoring Network: October



Nursing Industry Mentoring Network: March

Strengthening Study-to-Employment Pathways through Industry-Led Mentoring

To grow our own regional workforce, we're working to create pathways that take students from study to local employment. With over 30% of our student community enrolled in priority workforce areas such as Health and Human Services, our Industry Advisory Groups in Social Work and Nursing are leading the way in industry-led mentoring initiatives. Co-designed through collaboration with both industry and students, these groups put industry in the driver's seat, shaping a workforce equipped to meet local needs. Through mentoring, networking, and guidance, they connect students with local professionals, providing the skills, insights, and relationships necessary to step into jobs, helping to address the growing skill shortages in our region.

In October, the Social Work Mentoring Network Event welcomed Louise McGregor, Senior Social Worker at Atherton Hospital, and Toni Iacutone, School Counsellor at St Joseph's Primary. Their insights unpacked working life in two very different settings, helping students gain a clearer picture of what their future career could look like and how to navigate the path to get there.

In March, the Nursing Mentoring Network Event welcomed Nurses from Atherton Hospital, including Jenny Nash (Nurse/Midwife), Kayla Feltrin (ED Nurse), and Judy Ryan (Theatre/Endoscopy Nurse). Their practical advice and career stories highlighted the breadth of local nursing opportunities, broadening students' understanding of the field and the range of paths available to them within the local healthcare system.

Looking ahead, TUC will expand this mentoring model into other priority sectors that align with both our students' areas of study and the Tablelands workforce priorities. These will include sectors such as Education, Agriculture, and Management & Commerce, further supporting local industries by developing a skilled workforce that addresses regional needs.

Through ongoing industry consultation and collaboration, TUC ensures that the support students receive is directly tailored to the needs of the local community. By strengthening these local connections and adapting to the evolving needs of both students and industries, TUC is helping to create a sustainable workforce that supports the Tablelands' long-term prosperity and ensures that the talent developed here remains in our community for years to come.

Student Ambassadors Champion Regional Education

In our commitment to building student capacity and local connections, TUC launched the Student Ambassador Program. This initiative allows students to develop leadership, communication, and networking skills, and actively contribute to TUC by organising events, supporting peers, and promoting regional higher education. Since the program's launch, Opal, one of our first Student Ambassadors, has worked with the team to visit 88 local businesses across Atherton and Malanda. Their efforts are raising awareness of TUC, strengthening partnerships, and creating opportunities for growth.

....I want more people to know that studying locally is possible. That's why I became a Student Ambassador, to spread the word and inspire others to give higher education a go.

Opal, Student Ambassador
Bachelor of Arts, CQU

Connecting More Locals to Study

On the Tablelands, around 14% of locals hold a degree, compared to nearly double that nationally. At TUC, we're working to change that. To support locals, particularly those looking to upskill or re-enter the workforce, we hosted a pre-access workshop to help them explore education options and connect with providers. The steady flow of pre-access enquiries since reflects a growing demand for higher education in our region, which is promising to see. Locals want an education, and we're here to make it happen.



Celebrating Success: Vocational Graduates Step Into Careers

We proudly celebrated the graduation of four young Tablelands locals who successfully completed their vocational training and transitioned directly into local employment aligned with their career aspirations. The event, attended by Tablelands Deputy Mayor Dave Bilney, Councillor Con Spanos, industry partners, families, and staff, highlighted the accomplishments of Andre, Hosea, Bailey, and Keoni. Bailey secured a landscaping apprenticeship with Jade Creations, Andre and Hosea began work as Field Officers with NQ Land Management, and Keoni became a Nursery Hand at Lakeside Garden Centre. This milestone reflects both the individual achievements of our students and the broader impact of vocational training in developing a skilled, work-ready local workforce.



Nurturing Aspirations for Post-School Education

At VPG we are focused on a range of initiatives to support high school students in making informed decisions about their future and nurturing aspirations for higher education. During the reporting period, our efforts included:

- Sponsoring the 'Vocational Student of the Year' awards across all local high schools to celebrate excellence in vocational education.
- Delivering Year 12 Transition Talks at Atherton SHS and Malanda SHS to guide career planning and pathways into higher education and employment.
- Offering individual follow-up support to Year 12 school leavers, checking in on post-school education and career steps, and providing additional support as needed.
- Facilitating work experience opportunities at Mount St. Bernard College, exposing students to local career options and the workforce.



Pictured: John Cole Toyota team supports MSB student and aspiring apprentice mechanic, Reem, as he explores post-school career and education options during work experience.



126
Students



56
Families



20
Haircuts

Helping Local Students Return to School

For the second consecutive year, we partnered with Centacare to run a community-wide donation drive, collecting essential school supplies for local students. In January, as families prepared to head back to school, we co-hosted the "School Savvy" pop-up shop at the TUC, supporting 126 local students and 56 families with access to vital educational resources. This included 20 free back-to-school haircuts, ensuring students felt ready and confident to start the new school year. We're proud to support this initiative – each year, we see the real impact it has on our local families. By helping students start the school year prepared, we reinforce our commitment to providing equitable access to education and nurturing the love of learning within our community.





TUC STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Rachel Takes the Leap to Study

After nearly ten years working at VPG, helping locals find their career paths, Rachel decided it was time to practice what she's been preaching. This year, she enrolled in a Bachelor of Business with CQUniversity and registered at TUC to access local, on-the-ground support.

"I've spent years supporting others in their educational and employment goals, but now it's my turn to follow my own advice," says Ms. Postans. "I'm excited to start my Bachelor of Business with CQUniversity at TUC." For Rachel, this is her first time studying at a university level, and it has been a big adjustment. With TUC's practical help in navigating online learning platforms, booking lectures, and creating an effective study schedule, Rachel has found her footing. The TUC education coach has been a lifeline, offering both academic guidance and a supportive ear when things get tough.

Finding the right study environment was key for Rachel. "My learning style isn't suited to studying at home," she says. "As a mum, I need access to a quiet, dedicated space without distractions – like helping kids or cleaning. And being around like-minded people for 'adult conversations' is an added bonus."

With the flexibility of online learning, Rachel can balance her studies with family life while staying in her hometown. She knows that when assignments loom or exams approach, TUC will be there to keep her on track with practical support. 📖 Read Rachel's story in [The Express](#).



Jodi Takes Next Step Toward Paramedic Dream

Jodi's path to becoming a paramedic began with the STEPS bridging course at CQUniversity, and TUC quickly became her go-to space for study. As the first in her family to pursue a university degree, Jodi recognised the importance of having the right support, and TUC provided the perfect environment to stay focused. With quiet study spaces, flexible hours, and a close-knit community, Jodi was able to separate academic work from family life. The connections she made with fellow students, combined with TUC staff's encouragement, kept her on track. In January, Jodi celebrated completing her STEPS course. By March, she welcomed her baby and began her Bachelor of Paramedic Science. Now balancing motherhood with part-time study, Jodi appreciates the flexibility TUC provides. With the support of TUC's staff and resources, she is making steady progress toward her goal of becoming a paramedic while raising her family locally.



TUC Helps Edith Cross the Finish Line with Diploma

Edith has achieved something significant: completing her Diploma of Nursing through CQUniversity while working full-time at Atherton Hospital as an Assistant in Nursing. This qualification not only marks a personal achievement for Edith, but it also contributes skilled healthcare workers to our local hospitals. With Year 10 as her highest previous level of education and no family history of university study, Edith was stepping into uncharted territory. Balancing full-time work in healthcare with part-time study had its challenges, but Edith pushed through. During the final stages of her course, Edith relied on TUC for the extra support she needed. From guidance on assessments and formatting to technical help with writing and software, TUC provided the academic tools that helped Edith finish strong. Thanks to TUC's targeted support in those crucial months, Edith has completed her qualification and is now applying her expanded skillset in the local healthcare system.

Pictured: Community Partner QPWS
champions vocational students through
industry mentoring.



Take an Active Role In Shaping the Future of Our Community

At the Tablelands University Centre, we are committed to providing the best possible education and support for our students. However, we can't do it alone. Working in partnership with industry and community, we can provide students with the resources, experiences, and connections they require to succeed.

We are deeply grateful for the invaluable support from the Australian Government and the Tablelands Regional Council. However, to meet government expectations, local communities are asked to contribute 30% of the costs to sustain a Regional University Study Hub. To ensure the long-term success of the Tablelands Centre, we are actively seeking both in-kind and financial contributions. Your support is essential in helping us provide lasting educational opportunities for our community.

Explore our partnership packages and opportunities [here](#), or visit our [website](#) to make a donation online.

The TUC is an initiative of VPG.

As a registered charity endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient, VPG will provide a donation receipt for your contributions.